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Disarmament Commission

357th meeting

Tuesday, 5 April 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi ..... (Vanuatu)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): Mr. Chairman, my delegation compliments you on your unanimous election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year and pledges its full cooperation to you and your team to make this session a success. I appreciate the untiring efforts of the Ambassador of Senegal as the Commission's Chair last year. I also thank the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for his presentation before the Commission (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

I align my statement with that made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355) and wish to highlight certain points from my national perspective.

The Disarmament Commission commands unquestionable authority and importance as the main United Nations deliberative body on disarmament matters. Its universal membership provides the international community a unique platform to discuss all pertinent aspects of global disarmament issues and to adopt concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. However, the Commission has failed to deliver any tangible outcome for the past 16 years. Its successive failures in finding common ground for a way forward all these years have only added to our utter frustration and sense of wasted time.

With an unflinching commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, my country subscribes to the idea of time-bound general and complete disarmament of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and reaffirms its principled position that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We in Nepal believe that there is an urgent need to start negotiations on a legally binding document granting security assurances by the nuclear Powers to non-nuclear weapon States. We also believe that those negotiations should aim at strengthening international peace and security, at implementing measures to end the arms race and at realizing the ultimate goal of the elimination of the nuclear weapons. Nepal regrets that these lofty goals fell victim to the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach consensus on the final outcome document.

My Government supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world and welcomes any efforts to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We believe that establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an important step towards global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and towards securing negative security assurances.

It is a matter of concern that the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and security in many countries. Nepal notes with particular concern that there has been an increasing trend over the years in the production, transfer and trading of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. While every nation has the legitimate rights

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to acquire small arms and light weapons for defence, Nepal strongly supports the non-proliferation of such weapons, as well as measures to prevent and control their illicit trade.

My country believes that unilateral, bilateral and regional commitments constitute building blocks and enabling steps towards disarmament at the global level. Governments, civil society, academia and the private sector all have important roles to play in creating a society willing to be free from armaments. It is in that conviction that Kathmandu hosts the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. My Government is committed to strengthening the Regional Centre to make it into an effective United Nations outpost dedicated to the promotion of peace and disarmament at the regional level. We call on all sides to help enable the Centre play a greater role in more countries of the Asia-Pacific region, with an increased contribution by, and the participation of, more countries within and outside the region. In that connection, Nepal welcomes the encouragement for the important work and potential of the Centre expressed by representatives of the Asia-Pacific States. The Regional Centre was the only United Nations office in Kathmandu to have temporarily relocated outside Nepal after the earthquake last year, and the Government of Nepal expects the Centre to resume its work from Kathmandu at the earliest possible time.

Allow me to point out that the current impasse in the multilateral disarmament machinery is not due to procedural reasons but due to the lack of political will. We must therefore demonstrate the collective political will and strength for the United Nations Disarmament Commission to break its deadlock and become an all-important entity in the United Nations disarmament architecture once again.

In conclusion, unless and until we move ahead to deliver results on the ground by ensuring the full and effective implementation of all commitments with resolute political will and commensurate visionary steps, achieving complete disarmament will be as elusive as ever. My delegation looks forward to working closely with all members in the days ahead and hopes that we will be able to achieve significant progress during this cycle.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation has the pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission's at its 2016 session. We are fully confident that your experience and your diplomatic skills will allow us to achieve positive outcomes, in the light of the different topics and issues that we have to address during this session. My delegation fully supports you and the members of the Bureau in your efforts to ensure the success of this session.

My delegation would like to align itself with the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, on his re-election as Chair of Working Group 1, and to Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco on his re-election as Chair of Working Group 2.

The Iraqi Government attaches particular importance to the pivotal role of the Disarmament Commission as the interactive multilateral forum specialized in disarmament affairs within the United Nations, in spite of the many challenges it has faced since 1999 owing to a lack of consensus on its recommendations in support of international efforts aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We support the Commission's efforts to establish a comprehensive system to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all their aspects, prohibit their export to different conflict areas and monitor their movement across borders. That is why my Government would like to stress the need for all Member States to redouble their efforts and muster the political will to enable us to attain a world in which peace and security reign.

While it affirms its obligations and its firm support for the different disarmament treaties and the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Government of Iraq expresses its profound concern about the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use or threat of use. In that context, Iraq reiterates that the total eradication of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use, and that there is an urgent need to begin negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. That topic must be the Conference's top priority, with a view to concluding a non-discriminatory global convention that will prohibit the acquisition, development,

production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, according to a specified timetable. Iraq would also like to stress the need to conclude an unconditional and legally binding international instrument in order to provide non-nuclear-weapon States genuine guarantees that nuclear weapons will not be used against them by the nuclear-weapon States. That is a high priority for us.

My Government believes that establishing zones free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is the ultimate objective that can enable us to achieve regional and international peace and security. The establishment of such zones is the real guarantee that will allow us to adopt confidence-building measures at the regional level. Consequently, doing so would strengthen the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in a given geographical region. In that connection, the Middle East is the focus of my Government's intervention in this forum because of the rapidly evolving developments and events the region has experienced in recent years.

It is no secret that the region is witnessing conflict and instability, along with mounting fears of a growing phenomenon of international terrorism, whose danger has spread to all corners of the globe. Efforts to achieve its criminal goals are unrelenting. Those attempts, which we have witnessed in recent times, appear to be moving in the direction of obtaining weapons of mass destruction, as affirmed at the third Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, D.C., in late March. This reinforces the view of my country — which stands at the forefront of international counter-terrorism efforts — that the Middle East region must be a top priority in disarmament forums, with a view to ridding it of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the light of the challenges and the growing terrorist threat in the region.

To that end, we believe that the demand to rid the region of nuclear weapons will require earnest, genuine efforts to implement the relevant international resolutions, chief among them Security Council resolution 487 (1981), paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), and other relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted yearly by consensus. Those resolutions stress the importance of implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, given that that resolution was the basis for extending the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and of implementing the decisions taken by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

My delegation would like to express its disappointment at the fact that the Conference on Disarmament, as the multilateral forum for negotiation on disarmament — a unique body in that respect — has been unable to achieve any tangible progress or to assume its mandated negotiation role in the area of disarmament treaties, owing to the lack of consensus on the programme of work for nearly two decades. That is why we are calling on States to redouble efforts to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that will address the concerns of all Member States at the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament, in accordance with the Conference's rules of procedure, and in order to achieve progress on the issues before it. In that connection, our delegation would like to welcome the adoption of resolution 70/33, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations". Iraq endorses the resolution and thanks the Open-ended Working Group's efforts in that regard.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, those weapons are considered an additional threat no less dangerous or destructive than the other destructive threats posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is fully aware of the negative repercussions of those weapons, which can hinder development in societies. We are also aware of their dangerous role in armed conflicts. That is why they are now a major concern for a number of countries. The international community must take a serious stand on implementing the relevant resolutions that will combat the arbitrary proliferation of those weapons and prevent them from falling into the hands of armed terrorist groups, which are trying to obtain them by any means and to use them to target civilians, especially women and children.

Lastly, we would like to stress that Iraq is ready to cooperate with the Chair and other members of the Bureau, with a view to finding the best means of ensuring that the Commission is able to attain the goals that it was established to achieve and that its forthcoming triennial session will make that possible.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to express to you, Mr. Chair, and to the other members of the Bureau the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco on

your election to head the work of the Disarmament Commission. Rest assured of our full cooperation. I would also like to congratulate your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, for his admirable efforts, which allowed the Commission to adopt the agenda for its triennial cycle. I take this opportunity to thank the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for his statement to the Commission (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

The Moroccan delegation aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

Our deliberations are taking place in an international context marked by the deterioration of international security and the exacerbation of the terrorist threat, in particular in the Middle East and in the Sahelo-Saharan region. The situation is also marked by lethargy in the nuclear disarmament mechanisms and the absence of any real progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We remain convinced that nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) do not constitute a security guarantee or a guarantee of effective stability at the regional or international levels. Instead, the security of us all resides in dialogue, mutual respect and the development of economic partnerships that promote fair and lasting human development.

Nuclear disarmament remains the top priority for achieving the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and total and complete, internationally verifiable disarmament. The Kingdom of Morocco, party to all international instruments in the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, is firmly committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remain the only WMDs not subject to a standard universal ban through a binding legal instrument. The irreversible consequences of any use of nuclear weapons on the environment and on human life means that we must seriously move forward towards banning those weapons.

In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a key instrument for safeguarding peace and security throughout the world. We believe that it is imperative that the provisions of the NPT be respected by all States. Similarly, the measures recommended in the decisions of the Review Conferences constitute contracts that, when fully complied with, will allow us to move forward together towards the implementation of the Treaty's objectives, namely, the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons. Given the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the absence of substantial progress in the implementation of agreed measures, we believe that, despite the efforts made, we remain far from launching a disarmament process leading to a world without nuclear weapons.

We share the vision that disarmament is a gradual process. At the same time, the notion of a process requires a comprehensive approach that consists of having a clear, common goal in interlinked stages and substantial reductions to encourage irreversible progress. Such a process should also be transparent and internationally verifiable. Halting the modernization of nuclear arsenals and reducing their role in defence doctrines, as well as negative security assurances to non-nuclear States parties to the NPT, would constitute confidence-building measures in such a disarmament process. The ban on nuclear tests should also be irreversible and verifiable, which will not be possible without the entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In that regard, Morocco reiterates its call on all States, especially the nuclear Powers, that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty in order to facilitate its entry into force as soon as possible.

It is indisputable that the universality of a Treaty as important as the NPT should serve the common goal of collective security. Morocco stresses the importance of acceeding to the NPT and of concluding comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency by all States of the Middle East region, including Israel. It is regrettable that the NPT Review Conference was unable to take any decisions to advance international efforts towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in accordance with the 1995 resolution. An international conference on the issue could represent a historic opportunity to initiate a process that would allow us to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen regional peace and security. Dialogue should continue in order to achieve that goal.

Morocco remains deeply convinced of the relevance of the international security mechanisms. Creating a world free of nuclear weapons necessarily requires effective United Nations disarmament

machinery, which remain dependent on the political will of States and their respect for the obligations and commitments undertaken.

Since its inception, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has served as a multilateral negotiating forum in the area of disarmament. However, the lethargy in which the Conference on Disarmament has been confined for more than a decade — in contrast with the evolution of the international situation and the new security challenges confronting the world — undermines the ultimate goal and pursuit of general and complete disarmament. We share the observation that the problems in the CD seem to pertain to issues that are actually more of a political nature. Similarly, the First Committee should continue discussions on ways to increase the effectiveness of its work. Our delegation has submitted several proposals in that regard and will continue to actively contribute to that collective effort.

Morocco regrets the inability of the Disarmament Commission to agree on recommendations since 1999. Member States need to demonstrate flexibility and the necessary political will to facilitate agreements within the Commission. We should all take advantage of the Commission's deliberative mandate to consider all proposals on the subject of disarmament. No approach or process should be excluded from consideration, because, for us, this is the very spirit of the mandate of the Commission. Morocco, which chairs the Working Group on specific confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, welcomes the spirit that prevailed during the 2015 substantive session and will spare no effort to facilitate an agreement on recommendations with the support and cooperation of all Member States.

Our delegation remains willing to consider in a constructive spirit any proposal or initiative to revitalize the disarmament machinery and to relaunch the disarmament process. However, Morocco remains firmly committed to the integrity and mandate of the Conference on Disarmament. In that context, Morocco welcomes the convening of the first substantive session of the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The special session should establish a general diagnosis of the United Nations mechanisms responsible for disarmament, agree on solutions to the systemic problems of those mechanisms and strengthen the effectiveness of their modus operandi. The special session should also assess the implementation of the priorities established by the special session of 1978 and renew and strengthen the universal consensus on disarmament issues. A renewed consensus on the topic of disarmament should as well take into account both the developments since 1978, including the indefinite extension of the NPT, as well as the need to bolster the relevant legal instruments and the existence of nuclear-weapon States and those that have not acceded to any legal obligations in the field of disarmament.

All the relevant General Assembly resolutions call upon Member States to improve the effectiveness of the Commission's working methods. Resolution 70/68 calls for a revitalization of the Commission's work during the current three-year cycle and stresses that discussions on the issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission should be targeted and aim to achieve concrete results.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I likewise thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their commendable efforts during the previous session to advance the work of the Commission. The Senegalese delegation assures them all of its full cooperation and expresses its hope for a productive session.

After four cycles of stalemate during which not a single recommendation was formulated, the Commission is now entering the second year of its 2015-2017 triennial cycle under a global disarmament and non-proliferation regime that remains, alas, very difficult and continues to face numerous obstacles that are considerably at variance with the legitimate aspirations of Member States in this area. Overcoming the deadlock in disarmament forums requires major collective diplomatic efforts and greater political will on the part of each of our countries if we aspire to effectively respond to the security challenges that humankind faces, often helplessly.

It goes without saying that unilateralism and the pursuit of purely national interests can only breed distrust, suspicion, misunderstanding, defiance and confrontation. Also, while stressing the importance of the discussions last year, it is my country's hope that

the Commission will be able to conclude its work with concrete recommendations on issues on the agenda. Clearly, the growing recognition of the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation issues — challenges that inspired action in the recent past — would be conducive to a positive outcome this year. It is therefore imperative to take action to restore the Commission's credibility. To that end, it is necessary to go beyond generic discussions, which in the past did not enable the formulation of recommendations, as called for in General Assembly resolution 69/77.

Although progress towards consensus recommendations depends upon developments in the broader area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, I am convinced that our efforts will not be in vain and that the obstacles before us will not undermine our efforts to reach solutions that are acceptable to all parties. I trust that, with the involvement of all parties, the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be able, over the next three weeks, to achieve a firm consensus on the questions referred to it. Therefore, it is all the more important to demonstrate our political will to restore the credibility of this part of the disarmament machinery.

With respect to conventional weapons, the spread of which was an undisputed contributor to the destabilization of the Sahel region and other areas of tension around the world, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, in December 2014. At the same time, we call on countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it to ensure its universalization in order to facilitate the control of these weapons.

For its part, Senegal has supported several other initiatives in the area of disarmament and is committed to upholding the highest standards. To that end, my country signed the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention — the so-called Ottawa Convention — of 1 June 1997. It then endorsed the Wellington Declaration, which led to the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008. As for small arms and light weapons, we call for the strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is still not legally binding, as well as the International Marking and Tracing Instrument.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, Senegal regrets the failure of the 2015 ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to achieve consensus on a final document. The few glimmers of hope that we have seen — in particular the success during the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the conclusion of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms — by the two largest nuclear Powers, quickly gave way to the status quo whereby certain nuclear-weapon States continued to allocate significant investments to their manufacturing and development, which represents a serious concern with regard to the expansion of nuclear military programmes.

Far from discouraging us, however, that failure should spur us to work harder to achieve the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. With that conviction, my country favours the total eradication of nuclear activities of a military nature, which is the planet's only guarantee against devastation and misery — the natural consequence of the use of nuclear weapons. That will allow us to ensure the survival of our Mother Earth and of future generations and would forever banish our fear of experiencing the detonation of an atomic bomb, while also ensuring a peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

With all that in mind, Senegal believes that the following points should receive our utmost attention.

Ridding the world of nuclear weapons must remain more than ever a primary objective and must receive the support of all States. Strengthening the authority of the NPT, which must be universally adopted, must also remain a top priority. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the implementation of the commitments under the NPT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction are essential. The nuclear-weapon States should agree on an irreversible, verifiable and more ambitious programme to reduce their arsenals and, at the same time, provide security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States through a binding instrument. Existing nuclear-weapon-free zones should be strengthened and new ones should be created, particularly in the Middle East. Finally, there is a need to reaffirm countries' right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to ensure the effective and safe transfer of relevant technology to States fulfilling their obligations under the NPT, which would require strengthening the authority and capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Furthermore, negotiating and adopting a legally binding instrument banning the production of fissile materials and following up the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament of 26 September 2013 could constitute important steps towards resolving nuclear issues and leading to the speedy adoption of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons prohibiting the possession, development, production, procurement, testing, accumulation, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, including providing for their destruction.

Mr. Tovar Morillo (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Sir, I want to note how pleased we are that a country small in size but large in terms of proposals is presiding over the United Nations Disarmament Commission today. I congratulate you, Mr. Chair. Our group would also like to congratulate Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, who spoke before me, for his tireless efforts as Chair of the Disarmament Commission last year.

CELAC reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. CELAC reiterates its willingness to work constructively to carry out the complicated tasks entrusted to the Commission.

The Community proudly recalls the historic decision made by the Heads of State and Government of the member States of CELAC gathered in Havana on the occasion of the second Summit of the Community, on 28 and 29 January 2014, to formally declare Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace. They also reaffirmed CELAC's permanent commitment to settle disputes though peaceful means with the aim of forever ridding our region of the use and threat of use of force. This decision was reiterated during each subsequent CELAC Summit, namely, in 2015 at Belén, Costa Rica, and in Quito in 27 January of this year.

CELAC members reaffirm the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and to achieve and sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. In that context, we express our opposition to the enhancement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, which we believe is inconsistent with the obligation of nuclear disarmament. CELAC also reiterates the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies.

We express our strong support for the conclusion of a universal legally binding instrument that leads to effective, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament in order to achieve the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons under a multilaterally agreed timetable. We reiterate our proposal to start negotiations and subsequently adopt a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we underscore that, during the Community's Summit held in Belén, CELAC Heads of State and Government endorsed the Austrian Pledge, now called the Humanitarian Pledge, which has been endorsed by 127 States. The Community also supports the related resolutions, entitled "Humanitarian Pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons" (resolution 70/48), "Humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons" (resolution 70/47) and "Ethical imperatives for a nuclear-weapon-free world" (resolution 70/50), which were adopted during the seventieth session.

CELAC member States call for the negotiation and adoption, as soon as possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. It is a legitimate interest of all non-nuclear-weapon States, including the 33 CELAC member States, to receive unequivocal and legally binding assurances from the nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

CELAC commends the establishment by the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/33, of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, so as to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded for the urgent adoption of a legally binding instrument for the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons, to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. CELAC reiterates its commitment to actively participate in the Open-ended Working Group and welcomes the convening of its first session, held in Geneva from 22 to 26 of February. The Community expects the Working Group to yield concrete results and make substantive

recommendations during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly on the issues under its consideration and pledges to work constructively to that end.

While recalling the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), CELAC members reaffirm that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of the Charter of the United Nations. The Community reiterates that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and complete elimination.

CELAC member States are seriously concerned about the enormous humanitarian consequences and global effects of any accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons. We believe this issue should be raised whenever nuclear weapons are discussed. We therefore commend the organization of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held recently in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna for their deliberations and contributions to the global discourse on achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. As demonstrated by the testimonies of survivors, the evidence and the scientific data, nuclear weapons constitute a serious threat to security, the development of peoples and to civilization in general. Furthermore, it has been proved that no State or international organization has the capacity to successfully address and provide humanitarian assistance and protection in case of a nuclear blast. The Conferences also highlighted the ongoing risk of the detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or design.

When the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States was established, we confirmed the pride of our region at being the first densely populated area of the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone, via the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also called the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We wish to reiterate that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthens international peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime, and constitutes an important contribution to the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to review and withdraw all reservations to the Protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to respect the denuclearized character of Latin America and the Caribbean, thereby helping to eliminate the possible use of nuclear weapons against the countries of the region.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), have been a political, legal and institutional, and I would say even historic, reference point in the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world. Today, OPANAL's experience is also an important legacy for the international community in inspiring the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We express our grave disappointment at the lack of consensus at the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which ultimately prevented the adoption of the draft outcome document. At the same time, the provisions on nuclear disarmament in the draft outcome document did not meet the expectations of the CELAC member States. We see those provisions as a step backwards from the outcome documents of the previous Review Conferences. The failure of the latest Review Conference should serve as further impetus for those of us who truly believe in the need for the early prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons to renew efforts towards that goal.

CELAC regrets the failure to implement the agreement of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to hold an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Besides being an important contribution to the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, CELAC is strongly convinced that the establishment of such a zone would be a significant step in the peace process in the Middle East region. In that regard, CELAC deeply regrets that no agreement was achieved on the issue at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, and reminds all NPT States parties that the establishment of such a zone is an essential component of the decisions that led to the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, which should be fulfilled at the earliest possible date.

We reaffirm our States' commitment to the NPT and to the full implementation of its three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop and research production and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with articles

I, II, III and IV of the NPT. CELAC also reaffirms the commitment of all parties to the Treaty to facilitate the participation in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

CELAC emphasizes the importance of achieving the universality of the NPT, and therefore urges States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and calls on the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their commitments under article VI of the Treaty and to advance towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge them to fully and immediately implement the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), CELAC underscores the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Treaty and urges those countries listed in annex 2 that have not done so to sign or ratify this important international instrument as soon as possible. We also underline the urgent need for progress on this and other effective measures towards nuclear disarmament so as to give effect to article VI of the NPT. In that regard, CELAC urges the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to foster communication channels that allow the States of the region to address matters related to the entry into force of this instrument and the functioning of the Organization, while also addressing the statements that have been made in that regard under the the law of treaties, especially the Vienna Convention of 1969.

The Community recalls that, during its fourth Summit, held in Quito in January, our Heads of State insisted that all States must refrain from carrying out nuclear tests, other nuclear explosions or any other relevant non-explosive tests, including subcritical experiments and those conducted through simulations aimed at developing and improving nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. CELAC reiterates its strongest condemnation of the conduct of any type of nuclear test anywhere in the world. Such actions are contrary to the object and purpose of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, to the obligations and provisions set out in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and against the letter and spirit of the CTBT, thereby undermining its impact as a nuclear disarmament measure.

CELAC member States call for the maintenance of all current moratoriums on nuclear-weapon test explosions, pending the entry into force of the Treaty. At the same time, CELAC reiterates that these measures do not have the same permanent and legally binding effect that could be achieved with the entry into force of the Treaty in order to put an end to all nuclear-weapons test and any other type of nuclear tests or relevant non-explosive tests.

While recalling the holding for the first time of the United Nations high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, on 26 September 2013, CELAC highlights its intention to ensure proper follow-up to resolution 68/32, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", and welcomes with appreciation the decision of the General Assembly to hold a high-level conference no later than 2018 to identify measures and actions to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible term, aimed at adopting a treaty banning the development, production, procurement, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat to use of nuclear weapons and providing for their destruction within a multilaterally agreed time frame.

We commend the setting up of the Open-ended Working Group to discuss the agenda and the possibility of establishing a preparatory committee for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We welcome the election of Ecuador as Chair of the Open-ended Working group. We hope to conclude the three substantive sessions of the Working Group with a positive outcome, given that the previous two could not reach any agreement.

The Community welcomes with appreciation the celebration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We note the events held around the world to commemorate the first observation of this day. We urge Governments, Parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the Day.

We commend the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 and the continued engagement of all parties, as well as of the International Atomic Energy Agency, towards the full resolution of that issue. CELAC underlines that the Agreement showed once again that

dialogue and negotiations are the only effective way to settle disputes among Sates.

CELAC is convinced that practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons play an important role in contributing to understanding, transparency and cooperation among States and to the enhancement of stability and security, in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, above all, abiding by their voluntary nature and the specific concerns and security situations of States. In that regard, it is worth recalling the relevant consensus resolutions of the General Assembly. Our region has taken significant steps towards the implementation of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, which undoubtedly contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security. We therefore encourage Member States to strengthen, improve and extend confidence-building measures at all levels, as appropriate.

In that regard, the Community welcomes all transparency and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons already voluntarily undertaken by the States concerned in their respective regions or subregions, as well as the information on such measures provided on a voluntary basis to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures.

The Community also reaffirms the crucial importance of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, recognizes its significant contribution to the efforts carried out on this matter and stresses the need for its full and effective implementation. CELAC underscores that the adoption of the outcome document of the second Review Conference in 2012 gave the international community a clear goal and a time line to strengthen its efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. CELAC reiterates the importance of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

CELAC emphasizes that work must continue at the multilateral level in the framework of the Programme of Action in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, advancing towards the adoption of legally binding instruments on the marking and tracing and illicit brokering in order to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market. We take note of the outcome of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States held in June 2014, and look forward to actively participating in the 2014-2018 review cycle. In that regard, the Community expresses its commitment to continuing to move forward on these issues during the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in June.

While reaffirming the importance of regional and international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, CELAC agreed to establish a working group to study the crime of illicitly trading in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The working group has a mandate to comprehensively consider this issue in order to generate proposals for mechanisms and procedures that will allow us to better coordinate our efforts in a more effective way, on the basis of full respect for international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, so as to enhance prevention and the fight against trafficking in this category of weapons to the benefit of citizens' security.

Please excuse the length of my speech. A full version will be made available by the United Nations. Please excuse me as well for having arrived late and for all the unforeseen obstacles we have had to overcome. I congratulate the members of CELAC for their formidable effort and their full statement.

The Chair: I would like to remind delegations to kindly follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations speaking in their national capacity.

Mr. García-Larrache (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me join others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election. I also congratulate the Vice-Chairs. I wish you a productive session and assure you that you can count on the support of my delegation.

Last week a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group was held to explore the possibility of a new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. If there was a shared idea emerging from that session, it is that that the disarmament machinery has been bogged down for too many years in a stalemate. We must make the most of the second year of

the three-year cycle of the Commission to explore ways of overcoming this inertia, identify areas of consensus and move forward with a will to reach agreed solutions.

We regret that an opportunity to advance the talks on nuclear disarmament was missed at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held last May. However, we must not forget that the NPT is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the only instrument that can enable us to move forward together towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. We must continue to work, above all on the series of measures that enjoyed broad support at Conference, as well as on the commitments made at previous conferences, especially the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

It is true that the general situation of nuclear disarmament can lead to discouragement, but we cannot ignore the progress achieved when we found the political will to undertake it. In that regard, there are two recent developments that should be underscored.

The first is the Nuclear Security Summit held last week in Washington, D.C. The discussions during that series of Summits led, inter alia, to concrete measures to eliminate stockpiles of highly enriched plutonium and uranium and ways to improve the capacity of States in the fight against the smuggling of nuclear material. My country, which will be part of the future nuclear security contact group, will work to strengthen the security architecture in this area.

Secondly, we have seen how effort and diplomatic will have made it possible to reach a hitherto unthinkable nuclear deal with Iran, which will undoubtedly contribute to improving security and stability in the region. Spain, as a facilitator of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which implements the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed by the E3+3, will do its utmost to ensure that the diplomatic efforts made until now will yield fruit and allow Iran to fully re-enter the international system.

For my country, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing challenge to the non-proliferation regime, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, is a serious concern. The latest provocations by that country, which threaten the security of the entire region, only strengthen our resolve in the importance of effectively applying the existing sanctions regime. We hope that tightening the sanctions regime established by Security Council resolution 2270 (2016) will lead the Democratic People's Republic of Korea back to the negotiating table to permanently abandon its nuclear programme. In that effort, everyone can count on the full involvement of Spain, which, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), will work towards the complete implementation of resolution 2270 (2016).

Spain firmly believes in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We therefore regret that it was not possible to reach an agreement on convening a future conference on establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems in the Middle East. We reaffirm our support for the 1995 resolution and the agreements adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We encourage all parties to show genuine political resolve in coming together to achieve consensus in order to hold the conference as soon as possible, with the participation of all the countries of the region.

Although we are aware of the need to move the process of nuclear disarmament forward, the issue of security cannot be excluded from the debate if we want to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is only through a realistic debate in the framework of the NPT, with the participation of the nuclear-weapon States, that we will be able to move towards such an objective.

We must demand that the nuclear-weapon States make gradual cuts and implement confidence-building and transparency measures.

We firmly believe in the importance of recognizing the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, as summarized in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This is a matter that requires attention, but we must address it pragmatically. Let us not make the mistake of turning an element of unity into one of division.

The drafting of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices is what affords the Disarmament Conference a greater degree of political and technical maturity, constituting the logical next step to be addressed in a negotiation process. The excellent work of analysis and informal discussion undertaken over the past two years by the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty has provided new elements for

consideration for a future treaty of this kind. At the same time, we understand that, if a State wishes to raise its legitimate security interests in this framework, it can do so during negotiations.

It is necessary to maintain outer space as a secure and stable environment and ensure its peaceful use on an equitable and multilaterally accepted basis. To that end, we support the creation of confidence- and transparency-building measures, including the European Union's initiative to adopt a code of conduct.

We must not forget the other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and bacteriological weapons. Spain strongly supports the work being carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations joint investigative mechanism and hopes to be able to shed light on the responsibility for chemical attacks carried out in Syria. We also support the work that the OPCW is carrying out to clarify existing doubts concerning Syria's chemical arsenal.

Undoubtedly, the biggest risk facing us today in the area of weapons of niass destruction is the danger that they could fall into the hands non-State actors, in particular terrorist groups. That is a real and tangible danger, as evidenced by all the information that indicates that Da'esh has used chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria and may be looking to actively acquire weapons of mass destruction to carry out terrorist attacks in our cities.

This year is crucial in combating this threat. We are engaged in a comprehensive review process of the most important and effective instrument to prevent proliferation to non-State actors, namely, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We must work to ensure that the review leads to a new resolution that adapts and modernizes resolution 1540 (2004) to correspond to new situations and threats. In June, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) will organize an open meeting for all States here in New York so that all States Members of the United Nations can participate in and contribute their ideas to the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2004), which must be completed before December.

We must continue our efforts in the area of conventional weapons. In that regard, we must continue to fight to increase the number of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, an instrument that already has proved its importance since it has made possible linking the export of conventional weapons to respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Spain believes that the fight against the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a major priority. Such trafficking constitutes a threat not only to peace and security, but also to the development of all countries, especially the most vulnerable ones. We hope that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York in June, will explore the impact of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons on development and possible synergies between the Programme of Action, the Arms Trade Treaty and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

No small number of challenges continue to face us. Let us not fall into trap of complacency by accepting the inertia in the disarmament machinery as an excuse to stop moving forward towards a safer world for all.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Conference (UNDC). We acknowledge your leadership and experience in ensuring positive and constructive deliberations on disarmament and non-proliferation issues at this session. Nigeria also congratulates the members of the Bureau, and in particular the Chairs of the two Working Groups, for their hard work, and promises to constructively engage as they facilitate our deliberations at this session. I also take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Fodé Seck of Senegal.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.355). I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Nigeria underscores the importance of the UNDC as the sole deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament multilateral machinery, notwithstanding the numerous challenges that it has encountered over the years, not the least of which are the continued need to improve its methods of work, time and resources allocated and its lack of effective outcomes. Despite those obvious drawbacks, my delegation recognizes the potential of this body to articulate a way forward with regard to nuclear disarmament, which remains a

top priority, and pointedly confront the challenges of non-proliferation.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons without any doubt remains an existential threat to all humankind. The cost of maintaining and modernizing those weapons is both enormous and inexcusable when compared to resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that could further growth, development, prosperity and other peaceful and positive articulations of human endeavours. Several Disarmament Commission sessions have concluded without concrete outcomes. My delegation considers a successful 2016 session to be one that provides modest and unambiguous recommendations in the second year of the new cycle. Such an outcome will no doubt justify our persistence as well as convey the determination of Member States to make improvements in the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament, which has remained stalled and does not inspire confidence.

My delegation recalls the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 46 years ago, and the convening of the ninth Review Conference, a year ago. Despite its inability to produce a final outcome document with regard to the implementation of the Treaty's disarmament obligations, the NPT, alongside other nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures, has been partly successful in preventing the widespread use of nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore stresses that its universalization lies in strict compliance with its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Humankind has lived on the edge far too long. In simple terms, nuclear weapons are by definition instruments the sole objective of which is mass destruction. It has repeatedly been demonstrated that these inhumane and intolerable weapons should be taken off the list of global armaments as responsible and respected partners in human development projects. Curiously, they remain the only known weapons of mass destruction yet to be prohibited. Some of the questions that should agitate our minds are: Why do we maintain such weapons? Has the world been keeping a date with destruction? In the light of that, my delegation takes this opportunity to again highlight the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex). As a respected organ of the Organization, the International Court of Justice has most stridently affirmed that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

Our world has witnessed the pain of natural disasters and miseries that nuclear weapons wantonly bring to many regions of the world, including the cost of recovery and rehabilitation, which runs into billions of dollars. We must therefore strive to achieve the end goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and halt its spiralling descent into unnecessary chaos occasioned by an accidental or deliberate use of nuclear weapons. It is because of this situation that my delegation reiterates its grave concern about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We welcome the ongoing efforts by Member States in convening and providing support for the humanitarian consequences project. In a nutshell, we continue to call on the nuclear-weapon States to keep in mind the wholesale catastrophic consequences of nuclear explosions, whether immediate or long-term, and the implications for health, the environment, infrastructure and the climate, as well as the potential irreversiblity for human existence.

Nigeria proudly associates itself with, and strongly supports, the Treaty of Pelindaba as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear, or possibility, of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate this measure in the remaining parts of the world, including the Middle East.

As during the 2015 session, our deliberations this year will focus on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. My delegation considers this rich mix as fair and useful attempts to enrich our deliberations on all layers of disarmament. While the role of the UNDC in developing these concepts are well noted, the Commission should take a further step by translating those agreed elements into reality.

It therefore becomes imperative to continually highlight the measures taken in recent times to address the proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly the illicit acquisition and use of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. A number

of States in Africa are suffering from the illicit trade in such weapons. We therefore recognize the need and importance of engaging all States to significantly contribute to national and regional efforts to address the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons, including by significantly adhering to the elements of international cooperation and assistance. As proved by recent painful occurrences around us, no State is immune, either in the northern or southern hemispheres, to the devastating impact of the illicit acquisition and use of those weapons. We hope that, in the course of our deliberations, this session will highlight the importance of upholding our commitments.

My delegation remains committed to the principle and objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), and we continue to call for its universality and call on all State parties to ensure its effective implementation, as the first legally binding global instrument to regulate trade in conventional arms. It is indeed an instrument that could prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms by preventing diversion for unauthorized end use, including to non-State actors. In principle, the ATT could reduce human suffering and contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability. As you continue to guide our deliberations during this session, Mr. Chair, and as a confidence-building measure, we are hopeful that the working groups dedicated to discussing portions of this historic landmark Treaty will be kind enough to highlight the need to the continued elaboration of the usefulness of the ATT for my country, my region, the entire continent of Africa and the world at large.

Nigeria wishes to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contribution to disarmament measures and other future challenges. We note the invaluable input of the Centre in Africa, particularly in its efforts to ensure a robust programme on capacity-building and extending technical assistance to many States on the continent.

My delegation promises to work conscientiously towards fulfilling the mandate of the UNDC, as highlighted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We remain hopeful that Member States will be flexible as we begin deliberations in the coming days.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I also appreciate the statement made by Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs (see A/CN.10/PV.355). I assure you of my delegation's full support for the work of the Commission. I look forward to a productive session under your leadership.

While both existing and new disarmament challenges demand urgent progress, it is regrettable that the key components of the United Nations disarmament machinery — namely, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission — have long been unable to function as effective forums on disarmament. A constructive and practical approach is needed for the Commission to overcome the current deadlock and to bring its work back on track. That is a task that requires all of us to work together in a greater spirit of compromise and shared responsibility.

Last week, leaders from 52 countries and four international organizations gathered at the fourth Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington, D.C., to reaffirm their commitment to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The success of the Nuclear Security Summit process during the past six years has shown us that significant progress can be made towards the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world when States come together with shared conviction and political will. However, such a development has unfortunately been lacking in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in recent years.

For far too long, the debate over prioritizing one pillar over the other has hindered progress in strengthening the regime established by Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is disappointing that the 2015 NPT Review Conference could not build on the positive momentum of the 2010 Review Conference. Both the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States should work with renewed political will to overcome the current deadlock and set off a virtuous circle on the interlinked goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. Some of the most urgent tasks include bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force and beginning negotiations without further delay on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials.

The discussions on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms are also of vital

importance, particularly given the serious threats to international peace and security emanating from the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons today. The Republic of Korea welcomes the continuing progress towards the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and hopes that this positive momentum will guide us towards productive discussions on this agenda item.

The latest nuclear tests and the long-range ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have reminded us once again of the grave, unprecedented challenge to international peace and security and to the NPT regime posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-weapon programmes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only country in the world to conduct nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. Even as we speak, it is continuing to develop its nuclear-weapon capabilities in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and international norms. In doing so, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is diverting its scarce resources to the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), while turning a blind eye to the basic needs and the plight of its own people.

The Republic of Korea strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop any further provocations and to abandon all its nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programmes and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must realize that it cannot find any future in its nuclear programmes and that denuclearization alone will offer the country the right path towards peace, security and economic development.

The Republic of Korea fully supports the unanimous adoption in March of Security Council resolution 2270 (2016), which reflects the firm, united resolve of the international community that the development of nuclear weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never be tolerated. The strict implementation of resolution 2270 (2016) by all States Members of the United Nations will substantially impede the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of WMDs, leaving it with no option but to choose the path of denuclearization. The Republic of Korea encourages all Member States to cooperate to the fullest extent in ensuring the effective implementation of the resolution.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my sincere hope that the Commission will emerge from its prolonged deadlock to once again serve as a valuable platform for adopting concrete guidelines and recommendations in the field of disarmament. We look forward to constructive discussions during the next three weeks.

The Chair: There are still 12 speakers remaining on the list of speakers, and fewer than 70 minutes remaining for this meeting. With a view to allowing all delegations to deliver their statements, I would kindly invite speakers to deliver shortened versions of their statements. The full versions will be uploaded on the Disarmament Commission website.

Mr. Ait Abdeslam (Algeria): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the 2016 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). You can count on our full support and cooperation for the success of the Commission's work. I also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their elections, as well as to the Chairs of the two working groups, namely, the representatives of Morocco and Kazakhstan.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States and the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

Algeria attaches the utmost importance to general and complete disarmament as a means to ensure international peace and security and reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a core principle of negotiations on the disarmament agenda. We also reiterate the need for all Member States to pursue multilateral negotiations in good faith, as agreed by consensus in the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly, in order to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

My delegation reaffirms the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework in which to consider disarmament issues, as well as the relevance and centrality of the UNDC as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United

Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. In that regard, my delegation would like to stress the particular importance of this substantive session of the UNDC, which is expected to adopt concrete recommendations related to its two agenda items. We look forward to achieving a meaningful outcome at this session in order to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a State party to the main treaties related to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority. We reiterate our concern about the existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use or threat of use. We therefore believe in the need for substantive progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to again stress the need to universalize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and to ensure compliance in a balanced and comprehensive manner with each of its three pillars.

Numerous States have chosen to use atomic energy for exclusively civilian applications, in accordance with the provisions of the NPT. For many developing countries, nuclear energy represents a strategic choice for their economic development and energy security needs. Accordingly, we express our commitment to the legitimate right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the non-proliferation regime.

In accordance with the NPT, the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility to achieve nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, they should respect and fully implement their Treaty obligations and the commitments set out in the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which Algeria chaired, as well as in the Action Plan adopted by consensus at the eighth Review Conference, held in 2010. We express our deep regret at the absence of an outcome at the 2015 NPT Review Conference despite intensive consultations and endeavours. We still think that we lost a valuable opportunity and created doubt over the credibility of the whole system.

My delegation calls for the effective implementation of General Assembly resolutions, including the urgent commencement of negotiations for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, and the convening, no later than 2018, of a high-level conference to review progress made on this matter. Algeria also emphasizes the need for early and appropriate preparations to ensure a successful conference.

We also wish to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to allow its entry into force. The achievement of such an objective would contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament.

Along with other States, Algeria understands that the irreversible, devastating consequences of a nuclear-weapon explosion are significant. Such an explosion will not be constrained by national borders, but would have regional and global effects, potentially threatening the survival of humankind. Algeria has endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge and expects to cooperate with all States, international organizations and other parties in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in the light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes not only a confidence measure, but also a concrete step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, we affirm that the entry into force, in 2009, of the Treaty of Pelinbada, which established a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in Africa, represents an important contribution to strengthening international peace and security and reflects the strong commitment of African States. My country, which was among the first countries sign and ratify the Treaty, in particular calls on the nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant annexes to the Treaty.

Obviously, the example set by the Treaty of Pelinbada and by other nuclear-weapon-free zones should be followed in the volatile region of the Middle East. Algeria deeply regrets that this region is still prevented from establishing, and deprived of, such a zone years after the adoption by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. While rejecting that status quo, Algeria stresses its strong commitment to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 Action Plan. My delegation has expressed its strong disappointment about the total absence of tangible progress on this issue, which aims at promoting peace and security in the region and beyond.

Having joined the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its three Protocols in 2015, Algeria stresses that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in North Africa and the Sahel region, and constitutes a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime. On the basis of its national experience, Algeria reaffirms that the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument are more than ever of the utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation. We also wish to stress that international cooperation and assistance are essential to the implementation of those two instruments.

In that regard, Algeria wishes to underline that, in pursuit of the objective to contribute to international peace and security, confidence-building measures should be undertaken in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the right to self-determination of all peoples, while taking into account the particular situation of peoples under colonial or other forms of foreign domination or occupation, and recognizing the right of people to take legitimate action, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to realize their inalienable right to self-determination.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that all Member States will show the necessary political will to allow the Disarmament Commission to fulfil its mandate by elaborating concrete recommendations.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also congratulate Kazakhstan and Morocco on their election as Chairs of the Working Groups. We assure you, Sir, of the Sudan's cooperation in our deliberations.

The Sudan aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see CN.10/PV.355).

My delegation attaches due attention and importance to the Disarmament Commission as the specialized technical body responsible for holding substantive deliberations to make binding and action-oriented recommendations to reactivate the disarmament machinery, so as to finally achieve international peace and security. That will not happen as long as weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten humankind.

Unfortunately, we note the repeated setbacks with regard to the disarmament machinery, as well as the continuous development of nuclear, chemical and biological technology by major countries. This is despite the many protocols, instruments and conventions that call for the prohibition of such practices. That is why the majority of countries have stated that a policy of double standards prevails regarding how we address disarmament issues. And that is why we have doubts about the credibility of many conventions and instruments, which must be implemented in a fair and transparent manner if we are to believe in their effectiveness.

My country is adamant that nuclear disarmament is very important. We would like to express our concern about the fact that the nuclear-weapon States are not respecting their commitments in this area, including the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the decisions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the 2010 final document and Action Plan. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will show flexibility and real political will to abide by those commitments. My country is also concerned about the failure of the NPT Review Conference last year, and we regret the fact that it could not produce an outcome document.

Moreover, Israel continues to refuse to join the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That puts regional and international security at risk, especially in a very tense region.

We would also like to reiterate our call to all the countries that have not ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba to join it as soon as possible.

In our view, every country has the legitimate right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and scientific research.

The Sudan is an active partner in global disarmament efforts. It was at the forefront of countries in joining a number of relevant instruments and conventions, including the NPT and the Treaty of Pelindaba, the latter of which sought to establish a nuclear-weapon-free

zone in Africa. In addition, in 2004, we joined the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Also in 2004, our capital, Khartoum, hosted the first workshop for national authorities on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That conference came up with very important recommendations, including making Africa a chemical-weapon-free zone and the need for States to focus on the destruction of their chemical weapons.

The Sudan is still playing an effective role, especially with respect to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. As we have said previously, while we give due attention to nuclear disarmament, we have also been focusing a great deal on the issue of small arms and light weapons, as many countries are affected by that phenomenon. Small arms and light weapons kill thousands every year as a result of the illicit trade in conventional weapons.

As members know, this dimension is exacerbated by other natural phenomena, such as climate change, desertification and drought, and well as by other conflicts, such as conflicts over water. The acquisition of weapons has therefore become a ritual and a show of strength by many populations and communities, which is why we focus on the importance of controlling such weapons. Our country is aware of the risks linked to this phenomenon, and we are attending all relevant international conferences and strengthening the efforts of our national office to fight the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

We are fully convinced that this trade is linked to terrorism and transborder organized crime, as well as drug trafficking. For that reason, the Sudan is at the forefront of major efforts being undertaken within the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development with a view to strengthening all related efforts. We must make every effort to combat the spread of these weapons.

The efforts of manufacturing States are especially important, even more so than by affected States. Manufacturing States have to abide by the prohibition against exporting small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups and to individuals. We extend our support to the countries affected, in accordance with Chapter II of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Allow me to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on assuming the chairmanship of the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. My delegation is confident that under your able guidance we will proactively move forward in our work and fulfil the Commission's mandate.

I wish to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

The importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission cannot be questioned. It is the General Assembly's main subsidiary body for disarmament matters and the sole deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral machinery that allows for in-depth discussions on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Regrettably, since 1999 we have been unable to submit any such recommendations to the Assembly and therefore have been unable to fulfil the Disarmament Commission's mandate. Although promising, last year's session fell short of delivering recommendations to the General Assembly. It is our collective responsibility to overcome the impasse that has plagued the Commission since the turn of the century. It is up to us, States Members of the United Nations, to come together to revitalize the Commission. At this point, I believe that we are capable of achieving promising results. Nevertheless, in order to do so all Member States should display the necessary political will to reach agreement on recommendations. We urge all Member States to show greater political will, flexibility and cooperation during this new cycle.

The Royal Government of Cambodia reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament and emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects are essential to strengthening international peace and security and promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear disarmament obligations. Moreover, in view of the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for consideration of disarmament issues, non-proliferation

agreements should be addressed through inclusive, open, non-discriminatory processes and should not impose restrictions on access to the nuclear technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

While the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of any effort to address nuclear weapons, it is disappointing that the 2015 Review Conference failed to arrive at consensus in order to adopt a final document, leading to uncertainty as to our collective efforts to implement that international instrument. Despite the failure to adopt a final document, however, my country upholds the principles and purposes of the Treaty, and our commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains resolute. Given the concern about the threats to security and peace that nuclear and missile tests pose, it is imperative that we work harder to strengthen the relevant international instruments, including the NPT, and put the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force.

Once again, I would like to underscore the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and its mandate. I wish the Chair every success in his work and hope that, under his able guidance, we can achieve positive results to advance the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355) and by the representatative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Previous sessions of the Disarmament Commission were able to achieve significant results. For example, we can cite the 1988 verification principles, the 1996 guidelines on international arms transfers and the 1999 Guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Since then, however, the Commission has been unable to reach new agreements as a result of a lack of political will on the part a group of Member States.

Everything would suggest that the nuclear-weapon States are not truly considering the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the long term. The abundant resources dedicated to the modernization of their nuclear programmes and arsenals are proof of that. They are also failing to comply with the commitments undertaken pursuant to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to immediately implement the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, or the Action Plan agreed at thee 2010 Review Conference. What is the point of hundreds, or even thousands, of nuclear weapons from the 1950s and 1960s being decommissioned, when at the same time thousands more, increasingly more modern, are now deployed to be used at any time? So long as the nuclear-weapon States continue to consider such weapons to be legitimate guarantors of their stability and security, the survival of the human species and the planet itself will continue to be at risk. Nuclear weapons cannot continue to be the only weapon of mass destruction that have still not been prohibited.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the top priority on the international disarmament and security agenda. Our discussions in this forum should contribute to strengthening the rules, principles, obligations and commitments relating to nuclear disarmament, as agreed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as the NPT itself and the outcomes of the relevant Review Conferences. It is time that we begin multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive, binding, irreversible and verifiable convention for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

At the 2014 CELAC Summit, our region was declared a zone of peace, free of armed conflict. We feel honoured to be part of the first densely populated area in the world to declare itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In that regard, we reiterate that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the countries of the region constitutes a major step towards strengthening international peace and security and contributes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. In that regard, we reiterate our commitment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with what was agreed by the States parties to the NPT in 1995, 2000 and 2010. To that end, we regret that

we were unable to reach consensus for the adoption of the draft final document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference due to the refusal of certain countries to move forward towards establishing such a zone.

My delegation believes that practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons play a key role in contributing to the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States and increasing stability and security, in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, while respecting its voluntary nature and the specific security concerns of States. Our country reiterates the need to prohibit the supply of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons to non-State armed groups. In the hands of such groups that are closely linked to terrorist and extremist groups, those weapons lead to bloodshed for the peoples of Africa and the Middle East.

Venezuela has been working with other countries of the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in promoting confidence-building and security measures that include exchange of information and transparency with respect to defence spending and military activities, security measures, guarantees, compliance and verification. This is a promising process for achieving regional and international peace and security. It also serves to underscore our commitment to resolving any dispute through peaceful means. Moreover, it allows us to have more resources to meet the social commitments in our region. We call on the major military Powers to follow our example.

In conclusion, Venezuela expresses its support for the work of the Disarmament Commission and its success and to the whole working team. We reiterate our commitment and willingness to work constructively, together with all Member States, to complete the works outlined. In that regard, we call for an intensification of efforts to achieve significant results that would allow us to move forward determinedly in the sphere of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, thereby allowing us to overcome the current stalemate.

Mr. Kvelashvili (Georgia): On behalf of the Georgian delegation, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the Government of Vanuatu on your election as Chair of the 2016 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The Georgian delegation looks forward to working with you as you discharge your important duties. We wish you and the other members of the Bureau a successful session. We also thank the Secretariat for its valuable support and contribution to our work.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, related materials and technologies and the risk of nuclear terrorism represent a serious threat to human security. This problem is global and asymmetrical in nature, and it requires high-level coordination and cooperation, both regionally and internationally. In that regard, full compliance with the obligations under the relevant international arrangements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and other arrangements, must be viewed as the main priorities of the international community.

Georgia continues to regard the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We believe that the credibility of the NPT lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars.

We have adopted the new law on radioactive waste and strengthened State control over nuclear and radiation safety and security. Moreover, Georgia has established a new agency for radioactive waste management that covers both centralized storage and disposal facilities. In collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency, we approved the integrated nuclear security support plan for the period 2015-2019 and elaborated a national strategy and action plan to reduce chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear risks. In cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Government of Georgia organized high-level side events in October 2014 and 2015 on topics related to chemical, bacteriological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risk reduction. In December 2015, Georgia, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of the Philippines, as co-chairs, established the Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, aimed at promoting various CBRN-related topics at the United Nations by actively engaging Member States and the Secretariat. The Group will help integrate the CBRN component into the national security architecture and foster regional and subregional cooperation on CBRN-related challenges. As we prepare for our second meeting at the ambassadorial level tomorrow, we once

again encourage the Member States participating in the European Union's CBRN Centres of Excellence Risk Mitigation Initiative to join our Group.

We regret that an important component of international security, namely, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), continues to fail to effectively fulfil its mandate. Undoubtedly, the CD should exert significantly greater influence and produce a greater impact in its area of competence, especially in view of the deteriorating international security situation.

Together with other States Members of the United Nations, Georgia was a sponsor of the process launched in December 2006 aimed at developing a legally binding arms trade treaty. Georgia signed the landmark Arms Trade Treaty on 25 September 2013 and ratified it in December 2015.

In recent years, given twenty-first-century requirements, the adequacy of existing security arrangements has been questioned often. We share that view in part. However, taking into account the universal nature of the fundamental principles upon which the security architecture rests, we are confident that the main problem is related not to the imperfections of the system itself but instead to the unwillingness of certain countries to strictly comply with their obligations. Their non-compliance can irreversibly erode the existing security system and have large-scale negative implications. That is exactly what we are witnessing today. The security assurances provided to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum, in connection with the latter's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, have been ignored. The Russian Federation, one of the guarantor States, has openly challenged Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. That is an extremely dangerous development with potentially far-reaching negative implications, inter alia on the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The ongoing occupation of Ukrainian territories in which nuclear facilities and materials are located and the lack of legitimate control also constitute challenges to international security.

The Ukrainian case is not the only one in which Russia remains in serious breach of the Charter of the United Nations and other international treaties. In August 2008, the Russian Federation launched large-scale military aggression against my country, Georgia, which resulted in the occupation of over 20 per cent of our territory. The illegal military occupation of sovereign territory, in violation of the six-point ceasefire agreement of August 2008, poses a serious threat to regional and international peace and security and creates fertile ground for all sorts of illegal activities, including the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and the accumulation and illicit transfers of conventional arms.

In that connection, I would like to remind members that there have been several recorded attempts to smuggle nuclear and radioactive materials through the Russian-occupied regions of Georgia. The international community has been duly informed of them. Currently, there are approximately 12,000 Russian occupation troops stationed illegally in Georgia. In addition to the personnel buildup, Russia has fortified its military infrastructure in the occupied territories and deployed additional equipment to its military bases. The Russian infrastructure and equipment include military and naval bases, air fields, offensive weaponry, such as tanks, armoured personnel vehicles, Grad weapons systems, surface-to-air missile systems, multiple launch rocket systems, self-propelled Howitzers, air defence systems and tactical-operational missile launch systems. In addition to establishing military bases, Russia is renovating old and developing new transport infrastructure in the occupied Georgian territories. Doing so will allow Moscow to move its forces and hardware more rapidly.

Despite the direct call of the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement to withdraw to pre-war positions, Russian military forces remain in the occupied territories. They have expanded the zone of occupation, installed razor-wire military fences and other artificial obstacles along the occupation line to hinder, among other things, people-to-people contact and movement in both directions. We fear that the Russian military buildup will further intensify as a result of the implementation of the so-called treaties on alliance and integration signed by Moscow with its occupation regimes in Georgian territories. Those documents represent another step towards annexation of our regions.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, the Russian Federation must without any further delay comply fully with its international obligations under the Charter of the United Nations; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

arrangements, including the Helsinki Final Act and Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, as well as with the commitments Russia undertook by signing the Budapest Memorandum and the August 2008 ceasefire agreement. Each of those agreements requires that the Russian Federation end its illegal occupation of the sovereign territories of Georgia and Ukraine as soon as possible.

We must try to exhaust the potential of the existing system. Doing so will require the firm political will and readiness of all States to comply with international law. Otherwise, the process of erosion will become irreversible and will irretrievably undermine the existing security architecture.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): I congratulate Vanuatu and you, Mr. Chair, on assuming the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of our support.

Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

In January we commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution to affirm the objective of

> "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction" (*resolution 1 (I), para. 5 (c)*).

Even then, the existence of such indiscriminate and destructive weapons already sat ill with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is regrettable that, 70 years later, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain unresolved issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

Brazil is firmly committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. In our view, the key to the sustainability of the non-proliferation regime lies in reducing the incentives to proliferate. Any approach that is focused exclusively on non-proliferation, detached from the necessary progress in nuclear disarmament, is legally, politically and morally questionable, and therefore counterproductive. The nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime faces growing strain, as demonstrated by the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt an outcome document.

While States possessing nuclear weapons, or States that foresee resort to nuclear weapons through their alliances, persist in their unwillingness to significantly alter their reliance on those weapons, the grand bargain that allowed the NPT to come into being becomes increasingly harder to sustain, threatening both the nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation pillars of the Treaty. I reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons must be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines.

In line with resolution 69/77, which recommended that the agenda of the Disarmament Commission should provide for focused deliberations, Brazil believes that the Commission should concentrate its work on three important aspects of nuclear disarmament, namely, transparency, irreversibility and verification. Discussions on verification can build upon, inter alia, the principles agreed to by the Commission itself in 1988.

Moreover, we reiterate our support for the idea that, under this agenda item, the Commission could debate the principles and elements of a legally binding instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. That debate would be without prejudice to the debates that are under way in the Open-ended Working Group to substantively address concrete, effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, the establishment of which is supported by Brazil, as reflected by our co-sponsorship of resolution 70/33.

It is our firm view that those negotiations should take place within the existing multilateral system, either in the Conference on Disarmament or, if that is not viable, under the umbrella of the General Assembly in such bodies as the Open-ended Working Group. The high-level conference called for by resolution 68/32, to be convened no later than 2018, will also be an important element in this process.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humankind. Nuclear weapons increase tensions throughout the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation between and among States. The limited reductions made thus far are unfortunately offset by the continued modernization and qualitative

improvement of nuclear arsenals. As the Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons emphasized, nuclear weapons have long-lasting, devastating, indiscriminate effects that are felt by civilians first and foremost, making such weapons incompatible with international law and international humanitarian law. As Governments, we must regard their elimination as a moral imperative as well as a legal obligation.

At the multilateral level, Brazil participates on a regular basis in such confidence-building mechanisms as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument. Furthermore, Brazil signed the Arms Trade Treaty and is currently in the process of ratifying it. Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also relevant. Brazil and its South American neighbours are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency and defence policies, including on information on military expenditures and conventional arms.

While recognizing the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects pertaining to the field of conventional weapons that could be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission. Brazil favours the consideration of a third agenda item, also provided for in resolution 69/77, which could be devoted to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The inclusion of a third agenda item should not detract from efforts to advance the other two items, nor should it serve the purpose of creating artificial linkages between different issues. Each topic must be considered on its own merit.

The multilateral disarmament machinery has played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and building confidence among States, thereby contributing to the promotion of peace and security. Specifically regarding the Disarmament Commission, to name only a few important outcomes of past sessions of the Commission, I would underscore the previously mentioned 1988 principles on verification, which constitute a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty, the 1996 guidelines for international arms transfers and the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The latter guidelines have been of important political value in the development of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world, including with regard to the long-overdue establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

Notwithstanding those achievements, unfortunately, the Disarmament Commission has failed to fulfil its mandate for the past 17 years. We must take full advantage of the Commission's universal membership and consider more carefully the fact that it is not bound by a narrow, thematic agenda. While no one denies the complexity of the current global security situation, we must not forget that this body managed to agree on recommendations to the General Assembly during times of great tensions, such as the Cold War.

Brazil continues to view the lack of political will as the main obstacle to further progress in the Disarmament Commission. We are mindful that procedural aspects — particularly the setting of the agenda — must be examined with special attention in order to enable meaningful deliberations. There is no rational justification for the Commission to be unable to agree on substantive recommendations during the current triennial cycle. We will continue to work towards that objective in order for the Commission to have a favourable impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you and Vanuatu, Mr. Chair, on your election, as well as the Bureau. Your leadership at this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be of paramount importance in overcoming the protracted stalemate, which has lasted over 15 years, on some of the issues to be addressed in the coming days.

Colombia associates itself with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355).

The past year has been a historic one for the Organization. We have consolidated processes by reaching consensus in a manner that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. We adopted the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and, of course, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will be signed in the coming days. It is in that context that my country appeals to the members of the Disarmament Commission to approach this juncture as

an opportunity that inspires us to formulate, through consensus, a final document with recommendations on a subject as complex as disarmament, and thereby overcome the deadlock in the work of the Commission. My delegation recognizes and reaffirms that the Commission is the body within the disarmament machinery that is responsible for considering specific issues in order to provide concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. It is our hope that this year the need for consensus will not become a veto mechanism that makes it impossible to agree on anything.

In my statement, I will specifically address four topics, namely, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

On this occasion, and taking into account that this week we will commemorate the International Day for Mine Awareness, allow me to begin my statement by sharing the progress that we have had in this area from the perspective of the peace process. We are moving towards finalizing the process that will lead us to conclude a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the last conflict in the American Hemisphere and one of the few around the world that is being resolved through political dialogue. On the issue of comprehensive action against anti-personnel mines, at the negotiating table in Havana a crucial understanding was reached with this armed group after after three years of difficult negotiations. That was achieved by taking firm steps towards the eradication of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions, unexploded ordnance, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war in general. That is why Colombia reaffirms its long-standing domestic commitment to the international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control regime.

I would also like to highlight the central role that the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has in building confidence between the Government of Colombia and the FARC. Even before the conflict had come to an end, the parties agreed to address without delay the perverse effects of anti-personnel mines. The Government has been working side by side with civil society organizations, the army and guerrillas to demine 199 highly affected municipalities — which account for 60 per cent of national territory in which landmines are present — by 2021, in order to declare them mine-free and to significantly improve living conditions in communities affected by this scourge.

Secondly, in the area of conventional arms-control instruments, I would like to inform the Commission that this week the Colombian Congress approved the Arms Trade Treaty, which will soon be up for constitutional review. For Colombia, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives is a problem that should be understood as cross-cutting and taken together with other phenomena that threaten international peace and security, such as international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

My country's participation in international, hemispheric and subregional forums on the topic of conventional weapons is based on its guiding principles, namely, inclusion of the prohibition of their transfer to non-State actors; the criminalization of the illegal possession of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons; and inter-agency and international cooperation and information-sharing. Our commitment to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives is reflected year after year in Colombia's submission of resolution 70/49 with South Africa and Japan. The resolution underlines the need for States to enhance their efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

With respect to cluster munitions, Colombia deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention with the Secretary-General on 1 March, thereby affirming its commitment to the comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to the prohibition of the use of arms with humanitarian impact. Colombia welcomes the international community's interest in prohibiting a class of weapons that has caused a large number of victims and led conflicts to deteriorate in a manner contrary to international law. We also reiterate that the international community has a moral obligation to eliminate this type of weapon. We hope that it will soon be a legal obligation for all States as well, one particularly based on solidarity and cooperation.

For a country such as mine, which eagerly anticipates and yearns for peace, the stalemate on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a source of concern.

Colombia is working tirelessly with regional and other partners to strengthen national capacities to control radioactive elements, chemicals and biological agents. In that regard, Colombia is part of the first densely populated area of the world established as a zone free of nuclear weapons under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We have reaffirmed our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation in all forums where those issues are discussed, such as the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons and the Conference of States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

We support efforts aimed at achieving the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We express our concern about the possible proliferation of those weapons among non-State actors. In that connection, we emphatically call for compliance with the obligations set out in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

My country voted in favour of resolution 70/33, which decided to convene an open-ended working group to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. We are encouraged by the prospect of establishing complementary processes between the working group and the Disarmament Commission in order to contribute to the discussion on formulating relevant and concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

Colombia is of the view that all efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation should be accompanied by confidence-building measures, transparency and dialogue. We are convinced that, if the countries that possess such weapons do not demonstrate the necessary will and flexibility, it will be difficult to achieve a truly meaningful peace effort while humankind continues to confront the threat of nuclear weapons.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission during this year's substantive session. We also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups. We wish them all success in the exercise of their responsibilities and assure them of our cooperation.

The delegation of Cuba fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.355) and the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Cuba reaffirms the role of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on those issues.

The existence of more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, of which 4,300 are ready to be deployed, is a threat to the very survival of the human species. The very broad international support for nuclear disarmament was reiterated on 26 September, which marked the second annual International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear disarmament was also endorsed by the General Assembly, which requested, by a wide majority, to urgently start negotiations for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to provide for their prohibition and total destruction.

We support the work of the Open-ended Working Group, also established during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, with a mandate to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. We also support the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Cuba urges that all those forums — each with its own specific mandate — be harnessed, including the activities of the Commission's Working Group on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We draw attention to the call issued by the General Assembly — with the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States — to convene a high-level international conference, no later than 2018, to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time, with the aim of agreeing upon a phased programme for the complete elimination of

nuclear weapons within a specified time frame. We deeply regret that the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not been able to reach agreement, despite the political will and determination to move forward demonstrated by the overwhelming majority of the States parties to the Treaty. The lack of political will on the part of some States, including some nuclear-weapon States and others protected by the so-called nuclear umbrella, is the reason behind this failure and the situation of non-compliance with the provisions of the Treaty itself and with the agreements reached at the NPT Review Conferences of 1995, 2000 and 2010. It is high time for nuclear disarmament to cease to be a deferred and neglected goal. There is an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to act promptly to fulfil their unequivocal commitments to eliminate their entire nuclear arsenals in order to achieve the priority goal of nuclear disarmament. Our country calls on the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments under article VI of the Treaty and to immediately implement the 13 practical steps agreed at the NPT Review Conference of 2000 to achieve nuclear disarmament, as well as the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference.

We reaffirm the inalienable right of States to develop research, production and uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We also reiterate the commitment of all parties to the Treaty to facilitate participation in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Cuba deplores the lack of compliance with the agreement to hold an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and reiterates that the holding of that conference is an important and integral part of the final outcome of the 2010 Review Conference. The establishment of such a zone would also constitute a major step forward in the Middle East peace process. We once again call for the conference to be held without further delay.

Our country has reiterated that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by States or individuals would be the total elimination and prohibition of such weapons, under strict international control. That is why it is unacceptable that nuclear deterrence continues to be the bedrock of military doctrines that authorize the possession and use of nuclear stockpiles. In addition, the deployment of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States in the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States is a concern, since, in practice, this means there are many more "possessor States".

Cuba expresses its opposition to the development and modernization of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, as such conduct is inconsistent with nuclear disarmament obligations. We also oppose any kind of nuclear-weapon tests, including those conducted by supercomputers and other non-explosive sophisticated methods. Cuba calls for an end to political manipulation involving non-proliferation based on double standards and the existence of a club of the privileged that continues to develop its nuclear weapons, while the inalienable right of countries of the South to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is called into question.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Cuba considers that these voluntary measures are a means of strengthening international peace and security, to be taken in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting the specific security concerns of States. However, such confidence-building measures are not an alternative to disarmament.

Cuba firmly rejects the extension of the arbitrary and aggressive executive order issued by the President of the United States against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and demands the elimination of that order. We resolutely and loyally reaffirm the unconditional support of the Cuban Government and people for the fraternal Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We believe that such measures do not contribute to generating a climate of confidence in the region and that they undermine the principles of the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. We demand that that proclamation — whose aim is to banish once and for all the threat or use of force from our region — be respected.

Cuba stands ready to continue to work actively to achieve concrete results in the work of this important Commission. We hope that, at the end of this cycle, the Commission will be able to recommend concrete proposals to the General Assembly.

Election of other officers

The Chair: I am pleased to inform the Commission that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Mr. Tomasz Tokarski, Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Poland, as Vice-Chair of the Commission from that Group for the 2016 session.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect by acclamation Mr. Tomasz Tokarski as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2016 substantive session.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission, I warmly congratulate Mr. Tokarski as a newly elected member of the Bureau.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.